

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

March 10, 2014

Lincoln Center

PRESENT: Crockett, Cruz, Hagenow, Leon, Pazda, Scappaticci, Stafford, Thames

ALSO PRESENT: Interim Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kisiel, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Radikas

ABSENT: Pattacini, Assistant to the Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks

A. OPENING

A.1.& 2. Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:59 p.m. by Acting Chairperson Scappaticci. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Scappaticci.

A.3. Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting

ADOPTED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of February 24, 2014. Acting Secretary Cruz moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

7/0 – Voted in favor. (Thames not yet present)

B. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT – PART I

B.1. Youth Committee Spirit Relay for Life Awards

Dr. Kisiel introduced Grace DeAngelis to recognize the top three teams from last year. Ms. DeAngelis and Kelly Cox are heading the program this year. Ms. DeAngelis thanked Mrs. Brooks and Ms. Angeloni who helped last year in getting the district on board with Relay. She notes programs like this help build confident children who are connected to their community.

In third place this year was Bowers, raising \$3,778. Susan Tryon and Stacy Itzo represented the team. They informed us that Bowers and Buckley Schools have joined together to form a team and on Thursday, April 17th they are hosting a fundraiser at Georgina's in Bolton from 6:30-10:30 p.m. The cost is \$30 for this adult-only, silent auction event.

Julia, the daughter of one of our Board members, told us she has a great time participating in Relay. She feels it gives you joy and hope and brings out the good in people. She has participated both as a student at Highland Park and Bennet and it is a great, life-changing, experience.

Ms. Cox told us that this year's Relay will be held Friday, June 6 at 3:00 p.m. until Saturday, June 7 at 10:00 a.m.

Second place last year, by a mere 90c, was the team from Highland Park and Bennet, who raised \$6068. This is the first time in many years that this team did not raise the most money.

First place was the Illing team, led by Mike Pohl, raising \$6068.90. Mr. Pohl thanked their largest contributor to the team, Mr. Neal Leon, who donated \$1,000! The team originally was to honor faculty member Tim Lewis, however midway through the year Mr. Lewis passed away and the team turned to honoring his memory. Lauren, a student at Illing, told us the team recruits members in each class to participate. Taylor, a student, talked about the fundraising that happens, including car washes, selling flowers, and flocking. Flocking is when a group of fake flamingos is placed in a classroom and the class needs to raise money in order to send the flamingos to another classroom. The kids really love raising money for this wonderful cause.

Mr. Scappaticci thanked the staff and students and hopes they keep up the great work.

Mr. Leon thanked Ms. DeAngelis and suggested the incoming Superintendent Mr. Geary would make a great dunk tank participant!

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Dr. Kisiel presented six items on the Consent Calendar for Board approval.

C.1. Accept Personnel Action

Details had already been provided to the Board members with their agenda.

C.2. Approve Transfer of Funds

Details had already been provided to the Board members in their agenda folders.

- Transfer from Manchester High School Art Computer Supplies/Materials to Manchester High School Art Repairs account in the amount of \$450
- Transfer from Plant Operations System-wide Consultations, Plant Operations System-wide Print/Advertising, and Plant Operations System-wide Periodicals to Plant Operations System-wide Computer Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$1,250
- Transfer from Manchester High School Library/Media Contracted Services to Manchester High School Library/Media Computer Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$450

C.3. Accept the Manchester Head Start Recruitment Plan

C.4. Accept the Manchester Head Start Policy Council Bylaws

C.5. Accept the Manchester Head Start Selection Criteria for 2014-2015

C.6. Approve Extended Field Trip Request – Manchester High School – Robotics Team Vex Robotics World Championship – Anaheim, CA – 4/23/14 – 4/28/14 – 4-5 students participating – Mr. Chris Prytko

The Acting Chairman called for a motion.

Acting Secretary Cruz moved to accept under the Consent Calendar, Item #1, Item #3, Item #4 and Item #5. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Leon wondered why not all the items were included. It was explained that the other items would be approved under a second motion.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

Acting Secretary Cruz moved to approve under the Consent Calendar, Item #2 and Item #6. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Susan Jacobsen, 21 Hickory Lane, had questions about the SAAM program. She has previously sent the Board her concerns. She noted that last year SAAM helped 709 students, with 500 completing the program. She has concerns this year. Ms. Jacobsen recommends having a second session this year to help more kids achieve higher test

scores. She reviewed that this year 800 students in grades K-3 were invited to participate and it is anticipated 500 will accept. She wonders what will happen if all 800 accept the invitation. If we had a second session those students who were not invited in the first session could get the reinforcement they need. She questioned not offering the program to grade 4. Regarding the five day absence rule, she feels this causes intimidation to the parents to make them commit. Last, she questioned the amount of camp hours and what activities the children would participate in during that aspect of the day. She feels the camp should be of an academic nature. She feels the camp time is excessive to encourage participation in a 3 hour academic program.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, reviewed that this past Saturday was International Women's History Day, March 8th. Women have played an important role in our country's history. Mr. Stringfellow also talked about slavery and hears there will be a curriculum that incorporates *Twelve Years a Slave* in the near future. He talked about the next Olympics being held in Rio de Janeiro and slavery in that area, with an article in yesterday's *New York Times*. Mr. Stringfellow thinks Connecticut might have cause for a lawsuit regarding funding for education costs in reference to an article he read about Kansas. The February 27th *East Hartford Reminder* had an article about Carlos Marrero's Latin Enrichment Organization, which was founded in 2010. Mr. Stringfellow also recommended articles regarding the changing SATs from the *NY Times*, and a bullying article.

E. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART II

E.1. Status Report on Summer Advantage Academy of Manchester (S.A.A.M.)

Dr. Kisiel reviewed that S.A.A.M. is funded through the Alliance Grant.

Ms. Radikas stated that planning for this summer has occurred and the registration packets for invited students were distributed Wednesday. The number of invited students is 820 and the maximum capacity of the program is 760. Registration forms are due March 21st. This year there was a change in the way registration packets are collected, with Central Office staff actually visiting each elementary school on a weekly basis to collect the forms. This alleviates the registrations that may get lost in inter-office mail.

This year S.A.A.M. is being co-sponsored by Parks & Rec. Feedback last year was that parents wanted more recreation, outdoor events, and swimming time. Social interaction is important for children and this year the academics take place for a three hour session and then students have the option to participate in the recreation session. The academic sessions are held at Bennet and Highland Park. Students can then either be picked up or bussed home or may participate in the afternoon recreational session. The Parks & Rec has four sites this year, Highland Park,

Bennet, Verplanck, and Waddell. Students will be bussed to their rec location if it differs from their academic location. Parents were asked to number their choices for afternoon sites and efforts will be made to provide first or second choices. If the number of requests exceeds the number of available spots, a lottery system will be utilized to place students. Siblings will be placed at the same afternoon site. Waddell has a pool, so swimming will take place nearly every day, while the other three sites will bus to Globe Hollow 2-3 times a week. Students will eat lunch at the rec program.

Ms. Radikas noted the committee heard the feedback about the previous 3 day absence rule and increased the number of days to five this year. Students that miss five days will be dismissed from the program.

Mr. Leon wondered if the 760 capacity was due to space or finances. Ms. Radikas stated it is more based on space with Highland Park being able to accommodate 340 students and Bennet being able to accommodate 420 students. The goal this year is smaller classes of approximately 10 students each.

Mr. Thames commended the team for increasing the number of allowable absences and feels this is important so that deserving children are not precluded from taking advantage of the program.

Ms. Cruz suggested collecting information regarding students who drop out. Ms. Radikas stated this will be done and an assistant was hired at Central Office to help support the program as well. She notes they will also be looking at students who were invited but declined the program.

Ms. Pazda feels this is a fabulous program and is pleased that the focus is not just on slowing the summer slide, but on acceleration. She questioned a 7 hour afternoon with the Rec department. Ms. Radikas reviewed that parents wanted more outside opportunities. Providing children with the opportunity to be children and build relationships is important and partnering with Parks & Rec makes that possible. The 7 hours include transportation from the academic sites, lunch, and a late pick-up by parents if necessary. Field trips to the Science Center, as well as visits from Mystic touch tanks are only a couple of opportunities for learning that will take place.

Mr. Scappaticci had been emailed about why only children in grades K-3 were invited. Ms. Radikas stated the research shows that we need to catch the struggling children by 3rd grade. Early literacy models are K-3 and Federal and State funding all target K-3 as well. Invitations were based on benchmark NWEA scores.

E.2. New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC) High School Five-Year Progress Report

Dr. Kisiel reviewed that over five years ago NEASC, which is the high school accrediting agency, issued a list of 58 recommendations and placed MHS on warning for leadership and organization. Dr. Kisiel reviewed that MHS has remained fully accredited the entire time and as of May 2013 we were no longer on warning.

Mr. Matthew Geary gave a Power Point detailing the highlights of what has been done to respond to the issues outlined. To date 49 issues have been completed and the remaining 9 are in progress, compared to only 4 having been complete for the 2-year report. Mr. Geary's full presentation is available on the website.

Mr. Leon noted there is no money in the budget to address the locker rooms and wonders if funds can be added to a possible referendum in the future. Mr. Geary agreed and noted NEASC is not unreasonable and would understand that we are trying, but that funding is difficult.

Mr. Stafford noted+ that MCC English is offered at MHS and wondered if this is in response to SB40 legislation to end remedial courses at the college level. Mr. Geary stated it is and that the state is working to end remedial courses in college. He notes we have one of the best community colleges. No matter which English class a senior takes, from AP to Senior English, they will be prepared for a 4 credit college English class. We would like to offer a 4 credit MCC class at MHS and with hard work we are on the verge of making that happen. With Career Pathways, students can earn up to 15 MCC credits in various subjects, including Family Consumer Science.

Ms. Pazda thanked Mr. Geary for his presentation and noted that she was on the Board when the NEASC assessment occurred and the 58 recommendations were issued. She feels that under the current leadership there has been a tremendous change in culture and a focus on student learning and achievement at the school. She hopes in his new role as Superintendent, Mr. Geary is able to remain active at the high school. Ms. Pazda feels we are on the road to becoming an outstanding high school in the State of Connecticut. Mr. Geary gave kudos to the 200 staff and 1600 students who have been ready, willing, and able to work to make MHS great.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

G. COMMITTEE REPORTS

G.1. Personnel & Finance Committee

Mr. Leon noted the last meeting took place on February 19th. Attendees were Mr. Crockett, Mr. Leon, Ms. Hagenow, Mr. Pattacini (via phone), and Mrs. Brooks. The committee entered into Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations.

In open session Mrs. Brooks reviewed the FY12-13 Blum Shapiro audit report and the Kelly Educational Staffing, Mid-School Year Partnership Review for the 13-14 school year. To date Kelly has been able to provide substitute coverage for 92% of district absences. Prior to contracting with Kelly, when Manchester Public Schools employed the substitutes, the fill rate was approximately 70%. Though Kelly Services has done an excellent job providing the district with qualified substitutes, Administration has decided to go out to bid in the spring to ensure the district is contracting with the vendor that can provide the best pricing.

Mrs. Brooks informed the committee that the FY12-13 tuition revenue billed and received was \$5,530.88 more than projected to support the FY12-13 budget.

Due to a conflict the March meeting will be cancelled and the next meeting will be held April 23 at 5:30 p.m. in the Board Room at Central Office.

G.2. Policy Committee

Ms. Pazda reviewed the last meeting was held February 24th. Attendees were Mr. Scappaticci, Ms. Pazda, Ms. Hagenow, and Ms. Cruz. The committee discussed changes to the public comment section of the agenda. It was decided that the subject would be revisited in the context of revising the format for the entire Board agenda and Dr. Kiesel will provide some sample agendas at the next meeting of the committee. The committee decided not to bring to the Board the suggested policy regarding employment of former board members. Ms. Matfess reviewed the reasons behind suggested changes to the policy regarding Section 504. The first reading of that policy will take place this evening and will be included in the student section of the manual. The next meeting of the Policy Committee was this evening at 5:30 p.m.

G.3. Curriculum & Instruction Committee

Ms. Hagenow stated the committee met February 26th. In attendance were Ms. Hagenow, Ms. Pazda, Mr. Scappaticci, and Ms. Radikas. Also present were Mr. Geary, Dr. Oliver, and Dr. Ratchford. An overview of the MHS Academies was given, including concepts for the proposed academies. An overview of curriculum work being done in the district was given, including units being constructed using UbD (Understand by Design) and KUD (Know, Understand, Do). Until the end of the year, one day a month a small team will work on unit development. Summer work

will continue the process so that the 14-15 school year can begin with professional development dedicated to Tier I instruction. The next two meetings will be March 24th and May 27th.

H. NEW BUSINESS

H.1. Act to Endorse the High School Academies Proposal

Mr. Geary reviewed the proposed academies for MHS. The Medical Careers Academy will continue. The other six proposed academies are: STEM and design, Truth, CHEA (Culinary, Hospitality, and Entrepreneurship), CCA (Contemporary Communications), EPSA (Education/Public Services), and Performing Arts. A detailed explanation of each academy is available on the website and has been given to students. Mr. Geary explained that while electives will be open to everyone, students in the academy will be given first choice for electives in their area. Students do not need to choose an academy.

Mr. Leon appreciated the work and effort put into this. He wondered if all the teachers are all on board. Mr. Geary noted some teachers chose to stay with Freshmen or Seniors next year (who will not participate in academies), but the staff is excited and were given a choice about which academy to participate in. There was fairly equal interest across the academies. Teachers find this new work exciting.

Mr. Stafford offered his assistance in the culinary field regarding MCC and ServeSafe.

Mr. Crockett wondered how many students will participate in the academies. Mr. Geary expects about 500. He envisions 60-130 students per academy. Mr. Crockett asked if students not in an academy can take electives in that academy. Mr. Geary stated they can, though students in the academy will be given priority.

Mr. Crockett asked if we have enough resources for each academy. Mr. Geary reviewed that there is Perkins Funding of \$100,000. Over the summer there will be some refurbishing taking place and there are some funds available through the Alliance Grant and Nellie Mae. Mr. Geary does not anticipate needing more money than that. Mr. Crockett wondered if more funds would be needed after the Alliance Grant expires. Mr. Geary does not think so as this system is not a huge cost.

Acting Secretary Cruz moved to act to endorse the High School Academics Proposal. Mr. Thames seconded the motion.

8/0 – Voted in favor.

H.2. Proposed Revision to Section 504 Policy by Policy Committee

Dr. Kisiel presented proposed policy revisions regarding Section 504. This is the first reading of the proposed changes in this policy. There were no questions regarding the policy. The policy will come back at the next meeting for approval.

I. COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Pazda told us that she attended a "Read Across America" at Waddell with Ms. Diaz' class and she had received a wonderful thank you note from the class, which she shared with the Board. Ms. Pazda also attended the murder mystery dinner held at MHS last Friday by the Class of 2015. She felt the event was very well organized and the students were articulate. We should be proud of the students. She felt the teachers that participated were just amazing.

Dr. Kisiel thought this was a good opportunity to provide a status report on the school building projects. He pointed out there needed to be an adjustment made to his previous calendar as his work with the architect required more time than anticipated. Dr. Kisiel anticipates finishing his work with the architect this week and a Board meeting workshop will be held March 20th to review the work. He hopes to schedule a public forum the first week of April, tentatively April 2nd. By June 30th we need to submit a redraft of the school building projects to the State Board of Education.

Mr. Scappaticci reminded everyone that the Manchester High School musical *Hello Dolly* begins next Thursday. He is very excited about this wonderful production.

J. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to items on tonight's agenda)

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, really enjoyed the Relay for Life presentation. He notes the kids are on the right track, both with physical fitness and outreach to the community and he wishes them success for years to come. Mr. Stringfellow felt the NEASC report was thorough by Mr. Geary. He thinks the learning academies are putting us on the right path. He pointed out that East Hartford High School has a finance academy and MCC has both a manufacturing and EMT program. He talked about a CSPAN program regarding special education and hopes for full funding for special education in the future. Mr. Stringfellow recommended the book *The Everything Sign Language Book*. Regarding teacher evaluation, the CEA gave a presentation on COX regarding the pushback to the Common Core, there was also an article in this morning's *Courant*. Mr. Stringfellow notes all children need to learn and 504s are important. He thinks Mr. Geary is doing a fine job.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

None.

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Scappaticci called for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Leon moved and Ms. Pazda seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci
Board Secretary